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Re: SUPPORT on H.B. 5434 An Act Concerning the Regulation of Cannabis and
Opposition to some sections of HB6699

Dear Senator Maroney, Representative D'Agostino, Senator Fonfara, Representative Brown,
Senator Cicarella, Representative Rutigliano, and Distinguished Members of the General Law
Committee:

My name is John Daviau, I am a resident of Lebanon, CT, and co-chair of CT Smart
Approaches to Marijuana. I am testifying in support of H.B. 5434 - An Act Concerning the
Regulation of Cannabis.

Sometimes laws passed by the General Assembly inadvertently cause problems in CT's
communities. This is the case of RERACA which has created not just a few problems for our
communities and CT citizens. CT, with the leadership of the General Assembly, has made
significant strides in the last two decades to minimize the negative impacts of tobacco and
alcohol. It's time we apply the lessons we have learned from our experiences with these two
addictive drugs to legalized, commercialized marijuana.

Warning Labels

We should have warning labels similar to alcohol and tobacco. Proposed bill 5434 address
warning labels on all THC products, and while I agree warning labels should include that
such products may be addictive, lead to birth defects or cause psychosis, and that
secondhand cannabis smoke is toxic to human health, I do not believe these warning go far
enough. Health Warning Labels on all packaging should include graphics, which research
shows are more effective. All cannabis points of sale should be required to display health
warning info on large posters that are bilingual and include easily understood graphics.
As far as health warning label content, one example from VT is helpful. The VT Cannabis
Control Board warns:

- to keep all cannabis products away from children and pets
- not to use while pregnant or breastfeeding
- that using edibles contain additional dangers
- that it may not be transported across state lines
- and that persons under age 25 are more likely to experience harms to their brains.
[and of course illegal for anyone under the age of 21]

The VT Medical Society warns that Cannabis/THC may cause:

1. Psychosis
2. Impaired Driving
3. Addiction
4. Suicide Attempt
5. Uncontrollable vomiting
6. Harm to fetuses
7. Harms to nursing babies

Potency Caps

In addition, we should not allow producers to manipulate THC to make a stronger, more addictive product. We curtailed tobacco companies from manipulating nicotine in cigarettes to reduce addiction and other health issues. It is common sense to apply this to all THC products as well. Research shows that the ill effects of THC increase significantly with products over 10% THC. But at least setting a cap at 20% THC on all THC products and serving sizes will minimize some level of risk. This must include all THC vape products which were excluded from potency caps in RERACA. Local youth surveys across the state demonstrate that vaping is the preferred method of THC ingestion among youth. This loophole in potency caps must be closed to protect our youth. Finally, all THC edibles must be a single serving. To think that a gummy, or a brownie, or a candy bar could be 4 or 6 servings is ridiculous. No one has ever eaten a 1/4 of a gummy, or a quarter of a brownie. This loophole must also be closed.

Penalties compared to alcohol

Penalties for marijuana law violations should not be less, and even non-existent compared to alcohol. For example, a first time youth offender possessing alcohol is referred to a diversionary program such as a Juvenile Review Board. Any Youth in noncompliance is charged with a Class A misdemeanor. In addition, their driver's license is suspended or they must wait longer to apply for their license. We must not duplicate the mistakes we made with other juvenile law that resulted in an increase of youth stealing cars with no penalties. They were caught, released, only to steal another car a few days later. A drug dealer can simply use youths to make their transactions without concern for penalties or criminal record. And youth dealers can be out on the streets again the next day making their illegal sales, unconcerned. Laws for youth possession of marijuana and THC products should be the same as for alcohol and I call on the General Law Committee to close this loophole.

I also support a number of other provisions in proposed bill 5434, including

- support for prohibiting any gas station, convenience store, or any non-licensed cannabis retailer to sell any THC products including, but not limited to Delta 8, Delta 10, Delta 11, THC-O and any other THC derivative created from Hemp or the cannabis plant. Closing this loophole must be worded carefully so that any new product designed slightly different is covered, and only licensed dealers can sell these intoxicating THC & THC derivative products..

- Requiring that each applicant for a motor vehicle operator license under the age of 18 complete a course on the effects of cannabis and its impact on an individual's ability to operate a motor vehicle.
- Supporting the expansion of the drug recognition expert certification program. This will require financial support from the legislature to police departments across the state as the program is expensive and time consuming. But as there is no reliable roadside test for THC impairment, DRE's are essential to keeping our roads safe. Many other states with commercial marijuana sales have experienced increases in impaired driving and crashes due to THC impairment. I ask you protect our roads.
- Require that cannabis products be sold in child-proof containers. This should be in statute, not just in DCP regulations. And what child-proof packaging is, should be explicit in the law. Don't leave this up to the industry to decide.
- Require the Department of Consumer Protection to review and approve each cannabis product type and its dosage, review cannabis tracking procedures in retail establishments and pharmacies, and designate cannabis as a Schedule II controlled substance so it can be studied for both its benefits and harms
- Specify that "imminent risk of serious harm" includes a situation where a parent or guardian, visibly under the influence of cannabis, tries to pick up their child from a school or day care facility.
- Repeal restrictions on cannabis-related stops and searches of persons and motor vehicles when it is obvious that they are using while driving or driving under the influence. In addition, 2nd hand marijuana smoke from a passenger will create an impaired driving situation. I recommend the Committee address this as well.

I was surprised to see that some Legislators have a priority to better educate kids, especially children of color. This is a good idea but any positive outcomes for students, especially those students of color will be adversely affected by increased marijuana use. As in other states, cities will be where marijuana retailers will be concentrated resulting in increased access to marijuana for city kids. Studies are clear that a high density of alcohol retailers results in increased youth use, crime, etc. Retail marijuana stores will be no different, resulting in the same increased use.

HB 6699

I oppose Section 2 and Section 16 of Raised Bill 6699

Section 2, starting on line 272, would allow off-site event permitting to cannabis retailer of hybrid retailer. The inability to prevent, at either indoor and outdoor events, youth use or adult over use is a considerable concern and very difficult to manage successfully. Youth use is likely to increase at these events as well as safety issues from overconsumption including health and violence. I suggest deleting this section from Raised Bill 6699

Section 16 of Raised Bill 6699 would allow individual home cultivators to sell at events organized to facilitate marijuana sales. This section raises serious issues of concern.

1. Why would the state condone events that are organized to allow sales of an individually grown/produced product that is illegal for anyone under the age of 21? Do we allow these events for home brewed alcohol or homegrown tobacco products?
2. Buyers at these events would have no idea of what they're getting. Potencies would be a guess, were pesticides used on the plant material, were illegal drugs mixed into the joint, baked goods, etc?
3. How would these events prevent youth use? Again, at any indoor or outdoor event, preventing youth use is significantly more difficult and illegal use will increase.

I strongly recommend that the Committee strike Section 16 from Raised Bill 6699.

Thank you for the opportunity to have my voice heard on these important issues for Connecticut.

John Daviau